



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

CPPR Initiative: A Concept Paper for Developing Practitioner Knowledge in ESOL

Goal: To improve the quality of services provided to adult ESOL students, by helping practitioners understand and use the research emerging from NCSALL's Portland Labschool to develop and implement research-based instructional strategies, and by improving the research at the labschool through input from practitioners' involvement with the research.

Basic Concept: We will train and support practitioners in the northwest region to develop their knowledge about and then apply, in their own classrooms, research findings emerging from the NCSALL Portland ESOL Labschool. After learning about the research and its findings, practitioners will develop and try out effective instructional strategies suggested by the research. We will also train and support staff development planners from these states to offer staff development on research-based ESOL instructional strategies for ESOL practitioners in their states.

Activities: This initiative will be coordinated by NCSALL staff working on the Connecting Practice, Policy and Research (CPPR) initiative together with staff working at the ESOL Labschool.

First 2-day institute: Two practitioners and a staff development planner from each of the northwest states (Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and possibly MT, WY, and/or NV) attend two 2-day meetings/trainings in Portland over the course of the 2003-2004 year. In the first two-day meeting/training, they are introduced to the research being conducted in the ESOL labsite. We would then help the practitioners to generate and plan instructional strategies, based on the research findings, that they think could be applied in their own classrooms. In addition, staff developers will meet to learn about existing staff development modules that they can use back in their states, and they will participate in adapting or planning new modules based on the labschool research. These modules are designed for distance education of adult education and literacy teachers, appropriate for more rural areas of these states, but the modules can also guide live staff development sessions in areas where it is easier for teachers to congregate¹.

Support back in their states: Following this first meeting/training in Portland, over the

¹ These modules will build on work that Reuel has been doing developing professional development modules using the *corpus* of data from the labschool. This corpus includes audio and visual recordings of two sessions a day in the two labschool classes; audio recordings of teachers' reflections on the classes; scanned images of student work and class artifacts (worksheets, etc.); written teacher logs; some written transcriptions of the class recordings. These are linked in a dynamic way and will be available to be used in professional development modules.

next 9 months, the practitioners try out in their classes the instructional strategies they planned during the first institute. CPPR/NCSALL staff, as well as the staff development planner in their own states, will provide long-distance support to them during this time through e-mail, a listserv of all participating practitioners, and phone calls. Also, during these 9 months, the staff development planners organize training, using the research-based training modules, for practitioners in their states; they also receive support long-distance from each other and from CPPR/NCSALL staff.

Second two-day institute: After nine months in their own states, we will organize a second two-day meeting/training back in Portland for all practitioners and staff development planners. In this meeting/training, practitioners share with each other (and with the NCSALL ESOL labsite researchers) their knowledge and experience of implementing research-based strategies. Staff development planners also share the evaluations from the module trainings they organized and delivered, and together with the NCSALL researchers, they develop ideas for new modules. Together, all participants including CPPR/NCSALL staff and researchers will evaluate the project and make a plan for involving other practitioners in developing practitioner knowledge about ESOL research and in participating in research-based trainings over the next year, in order to help more practitioners in each state access, understand, judge and use the research coming out of the ESOL labsite.

NCSALL will publish the practitioners' written reports of their experiences (including their assessment of the impact of the activity on students) in a new on-line and paper journal titled *Practitioner Knowledge in Adult Learning and Literacy*. NCSALL will also publish the revised/piloted training modules. NCSALL will distribute the journal and modules through websites and paper publications.

Rationale: The Department of Education recognizes the contribution of practitioner knowledge as part of evidence-based educational practice but there are few opportunities for practitioners to generate and publish such research-based knowledge in the field of adult learning and literacy. The NCSALL Portland ESOL labsite is and will be conducting research that will generate research-based strategies for ESOL instruction. While NCSALL will publish and disseminate the findings and strategies from this research in text form (through website and paper publications), our experience in dissemination has taught us that the more practitioners are involved in learning about the research through staff development channels, the more likely they are to use and apply such research in their instructional practice. This CPPR initiative will directly involve 8 practitioners and 4 staff development planners as closely as possible in the research process itself, and they will communicate research findings directly within their state through their own experiences applying research findings and through staff development. We have learned that such in-depth involvement is more likely to lead to actual use of the research findings. Through the creation of a network of practitioners and staff developers involved in applying research to practice, we are increasing the depth and breadth of research-to-practice efforts in these states.

Process: CPPR staff (Beth Bingman and Cristine Smith) and Portland CC/Labsite staff (Reuel Kurzet) will coordinate (organize and facilitate) the Practitioner Knowledge Institute. These coordinators will contact relevant staff in each state to elicit their commitment to participate. Coordinators will help state staff recruit practitioners to participate. Each part of the institute will be two days in length (for a total of four days of meetings). Coordinators will communicate with practitioners between the two parts of the Institute, supporting them in designing and implementing their instructional strategies. Coordinators will also set up a listserv of participants so that they can share their experiences and new knowledge with each other from a distance. First training/meeting would be July 2003, and second training/meeting would be July 2004.

Budget: NCSALL will cover the time and travel of Cristine Smith and Beth Bingman. Portland CC/NCSALL labsite will cover the time of Reuel Kurzet; no travel is needed for her since she is based in Portland. NCSALL will also cover any costs related to conducting the meetings/trainings: photocopies, refreshments, notebooks. NCSALL will also cover the cost of publishing the Practitioner Knowledge journal and training modules.

We will need either funding from the states or from an external funder to pay for practitioners involvement. Costs include travel for 3 people from each state (2 practitioners and 1 staff development planner) for two trips to Portland, plus hotel and per diem. The practitioners will also receive a stipend to offset their time commitment. We anticipate involving up to six state teams, but are budgeting here for four.

Travel

3 people per state x \$750 (airfare, lodging and per diem for 2 days)	
x 2 meetings x 4 states	18,000

Stipends

\$1,500 per practitioner x 8 (2 per state x 4 states)	12,000
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If the states pick up the costs for practitioners and travel, cost per state would equal \$7,500 for three people to participate. Each additional practitioner would cost \$3,000. If external funding is secured, the following costs would be added:

Additional stipend for listserv moderator (one of the participants)	500
Phone, postage, other direct costs	500
Indirect	<u>11,780</u>
TOTAL from external sources	42,780

Next steps:

1. Get input from John, Steve and Hal. Talk with Hal about interest in doing this at Rutgers.
2. Talk to states about their involvement.
3. Send concept paper to OVAE and ask for funding. Seek funding from states (for their participation), and request use of NCSALL unallocated funding from OERI. If each source paid \$10,000, World Education dissemination money could make up the rest.
4. Reuel approach grantwriter a PCC to see if they have funding ideas.

DRAFT Outline for Journal: *Practitioner Knowledge in Adult Learning and Literacy*

Rationale: DOE is promoting evidence-based education as part of its strategic plan for improving the educational system. EBE is empirical evidence plus professional wisdom. Part of professional wisdom is practitioner knowledge. Practitioner knowledge comes from teachers learning about specific research findings, strategizing instructional improvements based on those findings, and trying them out in their classrooms. The research-based strategies they develop and the knowledge they gain from implementing these strategies can then be shared with other practitioners, to form the knowledge base of professional wisdom based on empirical evidence.

Format: Each article will have a similar format:

1. What research prompted you to try a new strategy in your classroom?
2. Why did this research interest you?
3. What did the research say (what were the research findings)?
4. What instructional or program strategy did you decide to implement, based on these findings?
5. How did you implement it, exactly?
6. What was the outcome of the strategy (for the learners, for the program, for you?)
What did you learn and what do you think the adult learners got from it?
7. What do you plan to do next?

Articles should be no more than 2,000-2,500 words (approximately 4 -5pages, single spaced). Each article will include a full reference (or references) for the research on which the practitioner s strategy was based, plus information about how to find that research on the web or elsewhere.

The journal could also include 1-2 peer-refereed practitioner research articles (different from the article outlined above because the practitioner would have conducted some form of data collection and analysis to test exactly how the strategy worked). These practitioner research articles would have been vetted by a review board made up of practitioners with experience conducting research.

The journal will come out twice a year.